

FRESHWATER PARISH COUNCIL – CONSULTATION EVENT
27TH JANUARY 2016
Memorial Hall, Freshwater

Firstly let me wish you all on behalf of Freshwater Parish Council, a Happy New Year and thanks to many of you that made the Village look great over Christmas.

Freshwater Parish Council is currently undertaking its annual task of agreeing the level of Precept for 2016-17.

The austerity measures adopted by the Government have meant that the grant given to Councils such as the Isle of Wight Council, has dramatically been reduced. The impact of this funding reduction on the Isle of Wight Council has meant that it is now in a position of only being able to fund 'statutory' services such as Children's Services and Adult Social Care and many of the 'discretionary' services which it has historically provided, are no longer able to be funded by IWC.

This puts communities such as ours in a position that we either decide to pay for those local services by means of our Precept or lose them.

As an example, last year you may remember that IWC discontinued the annual grant to West Wight Sports and Community Centre which had originally been £102k. With your support FPC resolved to provide funding of £30k pa for the next three years to WWSCC. This together with support from other local town and parish councils and grant funding has meant that whilst its longer-term future is by no means secure, WWSCC continues to provide an invaluable community facility.

This year is just as challenging and in order to gauge your views on how FPC needs to support the community we are holding a **CONSULTATION EVENT** at Freshwater Memorial Hall on Wednesday 27th January. This will be a 'drop in' event from 10.00am until 5.00pm where a number of displays will enable you to comment. In the evening there will be a public meeting from 7.30pm where we will be able to listen to your concerns.

For example, we have been in discussion with IWC over the past year on many topics:-

- Acquisition of the Freshwater Library by Community Asset Transfer and to continue to support the Library Service
- The future of the Public Conveniences at Moa Place, Freshwater Bay and Compton Car Park
- Increased On street parking and the future management of Public Car Parks
- Safety and Public Realm Improvements
- Acquisition by Community Asset Transfer of Stroud Playing Field
- Our Place Information Hub – Currently being consulted on locally
- Future management of Golden Hill and Afton Marsh
- The completion of Freshwater Neighbourhood Plan
- Future Planning Enforcement
- Beach Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance

Whatever our personal opinions, the IWC does not have resources to continue with its current service level and is looking to partner with local Parish Councils such as ours.

Whilst welcoming more input into the local governance of our community this inevitably necessitates an increased level of management at Parish level required to manage and monitor contracts, such that our resources could become stretched.

In order that we are able to understand and prioritise the support for those services and facilities it is important that we hear from you. Please come along.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

Mike Wheeler
Chair, Freshwater Parish Council